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Chair

Senator Sheila James Kuehl
Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg
Assemblymember John Laird
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (03-07)

Thursday, June 26, 2003

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LGBT Caucus Hails Landmark Supreme Court Decision *Decision Invalidates Sodomy Laws in 13 States*

Sacramento, CA - The California Legislative Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Caucus applauds the United States Supreme Court's landmark decision unveiled this morning that invalidates the Texas statute criminalizing private sexual activity between same-sex adults. This decision in effect invalidates similar laws in 12 other states.

"This ruling protects the basic dignity and privacy of all Americans," said Assembly Speaker pro Tempore Christine Kehoe (D-San Diego), chair of the LGBT Caucus. "This decision rightly overturns the laws in 13 states that criminalize private acts between consenting adults. This is a tremendous victory, not only for the LGBT community, but for all Americans."

Authored by Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, the 6-3 decision in Lawrence v. Texas held that the "Texas Homosexual Conduct Law" violated the fundamental right to privacy. The Texas statute, passed in 1973, made it a crime for same-sex couples to have sex in the privacy of their own home, but did not prohibit opposite-sex couples from engaging in the same sexual acts. The Court's Lawrence decision reverses the 1986 decision in Bowers vs. Hardwick that upheld Georgia's sodomy statute, giving the Supreme Court's imprimatur on millennia of anti-gay bias and discrimination.

"States have used these sodomy laws to justify discriminatory policies in employment, housing, public accommodations, family-related matters, and other aspects of our daily lives," added Kehoe. "There is no legitimate reason or rational basis for these laws other than to perpetuate the dehumanization of LGBT people everywhere. Overturning these laws is a great step forward in our continuing quest for equality."

The California Legislative LGBT Caucus was originally formed in June 2002. The members include Assembly Speaker pro Tempore Christine Kehoe, the Caucus chair, Senator Sheila James Kuehl, and Assemblymembers Jackie Goldberg, John Laird, and Mark Leno. The caucus' role is to present a forum for the California Legislature to discuss issues that affect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Californians and to further the goal of equality and justice for all Californians. The LGBT Caucus' formation made California the first state in the country to recognize an official caucus of openly-LGBT state legislators.

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